

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Lemmon School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

**Team Members:** Victoria Bantam and Linda Shirley, Educational Specialists

**Date of On Site Visit:** October 21, 2002

**Date of Report:** October 30, 2002

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- State data tables B,C,D,E,F,G & H
- Child find articles
- Referral information
- Interagency correspondence

### **Meets Requirements**

The Lemmon School District follows general supervision structures that are in alignment with their comprehensive plan and professional development. The district policies are in place and are consistent with Office of Special Education standards. The district participates in child find and screening activities to identify students with special needs. Students are placed by the local education association according to need and commensurate with state regulations. The local education association works closely with outside agencies in identifying and providing services to students with special needs. Professional development opportunities are made available to staff at the local, state and national level.

### **Needs Improvement**

The steering committee indicated they would like to improve the monitoring of referral information and child count information. The local education association would like to devise a plan to encourage more input from parents and an increased response to parent surveys.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Promising Practices**

The monitoring team noted that the Lemmon School District was utilizing Teacher Assistance Teams on the elementary and secondary level to assist in problem solving educational issues for individual students and provide teacher support.

There is also education being provided to all students in grades K-6 on autism, in order to provide a better understanding of autism and related behaviors of autism.

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team was in agreement with all the items presented by the steering committee in the Meets Requirements area.

### **Needs Improvement**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the steering committee in the area of “needs improvement”.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Pre-School screening data
- Suspension/Expulsion data
- State data tables B,C,E,F,K,L,M, and N

### **Meets Requirements**

The Lemmon School District has policies and procedures in place to provide students with a free and appropriate public education. The school district provides special services to children birth to age twenty-one. There are annual preschool screenings provided for children birth to age five. Procedures are in place in transitioning children from Individualized Family Service Plan to an Individual Education Plan. Individualized educational planning is utilized for designing and implementing student programs to meet the needs of students. The school district has general expulsion and suspension procedures in place. Procedural safeguards are in place for dealing with complaints, hearings and monitoring.

### **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed in the Meets Requirements area.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher/Student file reviews
- Needs assessment information
- Initial referral data
- State data tables G,H,J,L and M.

### **Meets Requirements**

Appropriate evaluation procedures are in place for the Lemmon School District. The district has certified staff providing assessments for students. The students are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability and referral data considered. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the evaluation process and consent is obtained prior to the evaluation of students. The parents are given copies of all evaluation reports.

### **Needs Improvement**

Functional assessment needs to be a part of the initial and three-year re-evaluation process. Student evaluations need to be completed within twenty-five school days after parental consent has been received. The three-year re-evaluation needs to be completed within the three- year time span.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The procedures for appropriate evaluation are in place, but the monitoring team could not validate that all procedures were followed. The following items were moved to the “out of compliance category”. There is no documentation that the parents are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the planning of student evaluations. The monitoring team was in agreement with the other areas listed in the Meets Requirements category.

### **Needs Improvement**

The monitoring team could not validate that functional evaluation is a part of the initial and three year reevaluation assessment process and has moved this to the “out of compliance category”. The monitoring team is in agreement with the other items in the need improvement category.

### **Out of Compliance**

## **ARSD 24:05:30:17 Prior Notice to Evaluate**

The review team located one file where consent to evaluate was not obtained. In one student file the consent form was signed, but there was no list of assessments to be given.

## **ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation Procedures**

The comprehensive evaluation must include functional evaluation. Upon review of six student files, no functional evaluation was included within the twenty-five day evaluation period for the student's initial and three-year re-evaluation.

Parents must be afforded opportunities to provide input when evaluations are planned. Their input needs to be documented. The monitoring team found no documentation of parent input into the planning of student evaluations.

At age sixteen transition assessments need to be provided and included as part of the student's program planning for transitional activities. In two files of students age sixteen or older there were no transition assessments located.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Surrogate training manual
- Parental rights pamphlet
- Student/parent surveys
- IEP reviews
- State data tables L & M

### **Meets Requirements**

The Lemmon School District implements procedural safeguards and provides additional information to assist parents in understanding these procedural safeguards.

### **Needs Improvement**

The special education staff should encourage the students to be a part of the IEP process and to explain the content of their IEP to a degree appropriate for their age level. The district needs to ensure that all prior notices and consent to evaluate are maintained in the student files.

### **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the statements in the Meets Requirements category.

## **Needs Improvement**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed in the need improvement area.

### **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student/teacher file reviews
- District surveys
- Data tables K,L,M and N
- Personnel development

## **Meets Requirements**

The Lemmon School District has properly trained and certified staff. The special education staff is provided with opportunities for professional development and insight in developing programs to meet the needs of all students. The district has an appropriate plan in place to develop, review and revise the IEP. The district has an appropriate plan in place regarding early intervention and exit information. The majority of students felt that they are involved in the development of their IEP and were being taught concepts beneficial to their future.

## **Needs Improvement**

The district has a plan in place for handling hearing and complaint requests, but there have been no requests made. The district needs to continue to monitor IEP guidelines and IEP time lines. The district has worked to improve previous findings in the noncompliance area of the IEP. The steering committee indicated they needed to continue to educate students about the meaning and content of their individual education program.

#### **Validation Results**

## **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed under the Meets Requirements area.

## **Needs Improvement**

The monitoring team was in agreement with all but one area in the need improvement category. The monitoring team could not validate that the annual goals and short-term objectives contained appropriate criteria. The team has moved this item into the out of compliance area.

## **Out of Compliance**

### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 IEP Content**

The annual goals need to be observable and reasonable to attain in one year. In four files reviewed the annual goals were not written in a manner that would be observable on their own. The following is an example; “Student will improve written mechanics by mastering 100% of the following objectives.”

The short-term objective or annual goals need to have conditions, performance and criteria listed. The short-term objectives lacked these elements. The following is an example; “will correctly say the targeted sounds in all positions of words or sentences”; no condition is stated. Another example is: “Student will capitalize words correctly in given sentences, with 90% mastery”. This does not utilize two sets of criteria, which might include the number of trials the student would perform the task.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student/parent/teacher surveys
- State data tables B,E,F, L and M
- Student file review

## **Meets Requirements**

The Lemmon School district has policies and procedures in place to support the continuum of least restrictive environment. The district needs to continue with the placement of students in the appropriate learning environment and with students their age.

## **Needs Improvement**

The district stated that it would be beneficial for the school district to provide an in-service regarding modifications and accommodations

**Validation Results**

**Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed in the Meets Requirement category.

**Needs Improvement**

The review team was in agreement with the statement made in the Needs Improvement category.